BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Issue: **99-36** **11** Pages
September 10, 1999

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Market

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate was unchanged again in August, staying at 8.6% (seasonally adjusted) for the third straight month.** The lack of movement in the jobless rate came as an increase in the size of the labour force (12,300, or +0.6%) was absorbed by a net gain of 12,200 (+0.6%) in the number of people with jobs.

  Canada's unemployment rate also showed little change in August, edging up 0.1 percentage point, to 7.8%, as the labour force and the number of people employed remained at virtually the same level as in July. Unemployment rates rose in the Prairies, Quebec and New Brunswick, but declined in Ontario and the three other Atlantic provinces. Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta all saw their unemployment rates increase 0.4 percentage points between July and August.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Among the regions, Northeast (+10.7%, 3-month moving average) and Thompson/Okanagan (+10.0%) continued to be plagued by double-digit unemployment rates.** The northeastern region of the province, in particular, has seen a reversal of fortunes during the last year. Its unemployment rate was one of the lowest in the country (hovering around 3%) at the beginning of 1998. In Thompson/Okanagan, the unemployment rate exceeded 10% for the sixth straight month in August. Cariboo's jobless rate was 9.8%, well below the 14.1% level seen a year earlier. Kootenay (7.6%) and Vancouver Island/Coast (7.7%) were the regions with the lowest unemployment rates. The rate was 8.4% in Mainland/Southwest and 8.8% in North Coast/Nechako. *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Economy

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities decreased nearly a quarter (-22.4%, seasonally adjusted) between June and July.** The decline in planned construction came on the heels of two months of solid gains (+14.8% in May and +32.5% in June).

  Construction intentions were lower in both the residential (-15.8%) and non-residential (-28.0%) sectors. On the non-residential side, the value of planned institutional and government buildings fell for the first time since February. Permits for industrial projects also dropped below June levels.

  BC was the only province outside Atlantic Canada where construction intentions were down in July. Nationwide, they rose 4.3%, largely due to an increase in planned non-residential projects (+9.1%). Saskatchewan (+70.6%) and Newfoundland (+63.3%) led the provinces. The three other Atlantic provinces all posted declines, as did the territories, while more moderate increases were seen in the rest of the country.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Capacity use by Canadian industries increased for the third time in a row in the second quarter of 1999.** The capacity utilization rate was 83.8%, its highest level in almost two years. Manufacturers were the main contributors to the increase in capacity use, with an overall utilization rate of 86.2%. Producers of vehicles, electronic products, non-metallic minerals, rubber, and petroleum and coal products all operated at more than 90% of their full capacity.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Report **Team Canada goes down under**

Did you know...

36% of Canadian taxfilers who were eligible to contribute to an RRSP in 1996 did so. Employees (43%) were more likely to put money into an RRSP than the self-employed (35%), whose participation rates ranged from about 30% for farmers and fishermen to 61% for professionals.

Housing

- **The cost of new housing in the province continued to fall in July.** Vancouver's new housing price index (NHPI) was down 4.0% from the previous July, while the index for Victoria dropped 3.3%. July marked the 62nd consecutive year-over-year decline in new house prices in Vancouver. It was the 63rd in Victoria. Nationally, new house prices were up 0.6% as prices rose in all cities except Vancouver, Victoria and Sudbury-Thunder Bay (-0.8%). Calgary (+3.9%), Halifax (+3.7%) and Regina (+3.6%) posted the largest increases. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC housing starts dropped 3.4% (seasonally adjusted) between July and August.** Nationally, the number of starts was marginally higher (+0.3%) than in July, reflecting gains in Ontario (+1.1%), Alberta (+16.7%) and PEI (+25.0%) which were offset by declines in all other provinces. *Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation*

Seniors Behind the Wheel

- **In 1996, about half of seniors living in private households were drivers.** Sixty percent of seniors in rural areas and small towns (less than 30,000 population) drove a car, truck or mini-van, while those living in larger cities were less likely (46%) to get behind the wheel.

  Elderly men were more likely to be in the driver's seat than women. In more than half (55%) of senior households, the husband was the exclusive driver of the family car, even if his wife had a valid drivers' licence. Married elderly women, when they drove, travelled very short distances, averaging 15 kilometres a day. Older drivers are more likely than those in younger age groups to have health problems that may affect their driving, but they tend to compensate for these limitations by driving shorter distances and avoiding night driving, busy highways and downtown areas. *Source: SC, Catalogue 11-008*

From University to College

- **A 1997 survey of Canadian university graduates indicates that almost half of the people who earned a bachelor's degree in 1995 had gone back to school within two years of graduating.** Sixteen percent sought professional certification, 15% enrolled in graduate school, 8% worked on earning a second bachelor's degree, and 3% took other undergraduate courses. Five percent enrolled in college programs, and 2% were in trade or vocational schools.

  Source: SC, Catalogue 11-008

- **Among those who obtained a bachelor's degree in 1990, 7% had subsequently earned a college diploma by 1995.** In comparison, just 3% of 1982 graduates–and 5% of those who received a bachelor's degree in 1986–had earned a college diploma five years after completing university. Most 1990 graduates chose programs in commerce, management or business administration (22%), data processing or computer science (14%), nursing (9%) or medical lab technologies (8%). Their reasons for pursuing a college education after obtaining a degree were usually labour-market related. The odds of working full-time were 1.4 times higher for bachelor's graduates who had a college diploma than for those who did not further their education. *Source: SC, Catalogue 11-008*

Kids at Church

- **One in three (36%) Canadian children aged 12 and under attended religious services at least once a month in 1994/95, most of them on a weekly basis.** A further 22% of children attended less frequently, but went to services at least once a year. Weekly attendance was highest among children whose families were affiliated with the Jehovah's Witnesses (90%), smaller (mainly Christian) denominations (64%) and the Baptist (60%) church. Muslims (44%) also had a relatively high attendance rate. Attendance was lowest in the United (18%), Anglican (18%) and Roman Catholic (22%) churches.

  Regular attendance at religious services increased with the educational attainment of the mother. It was highest in families where the mother had a university degree (40%) and lowest in those where the mother had not graduated from high school (30%). *Source: SC, Catalogue 11-008*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

September 10, 1999

Infoline Report: September Team Canada mission to visit Japan and Australia

Contact: George Dufour / (250) 387-0376

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On September 11 British Columbia will join other provinces, the territories and the federal government on a Team Canada Mission to Japan and Australia. This will be the fifth in a series that began with a November 1994 visit to China.

No province has more export business at stake in the two countries to be visited on the upcoming mission than British Columbia. Just over half (53 per cent) of all Canadian exports to Japan originate in British Columbia. The $4,532 million shipped from British Columbia to Japan in 1998 amounted to 17 per cent of the province's total exports, the highest proportion in Canada.

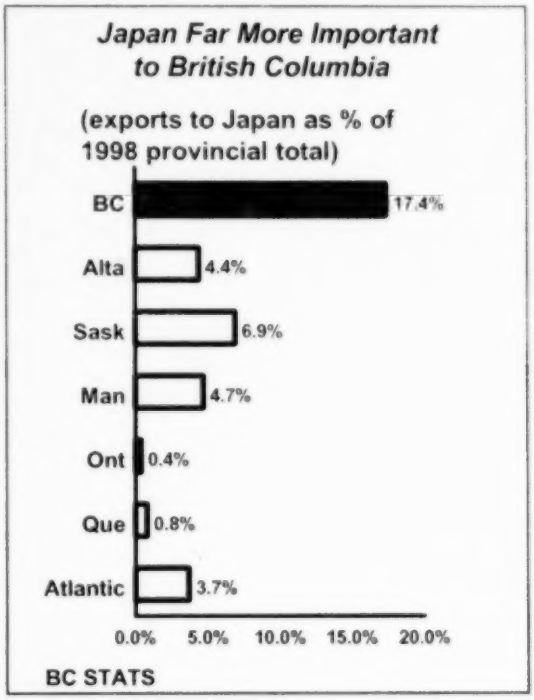
Twenty-four per cent of all 1998 Canadian exports to Australia originated in British Columbia. The $226 million shipped from British Columbia to Australia was relatively small in relation to what the province shipped to its larger international markets.

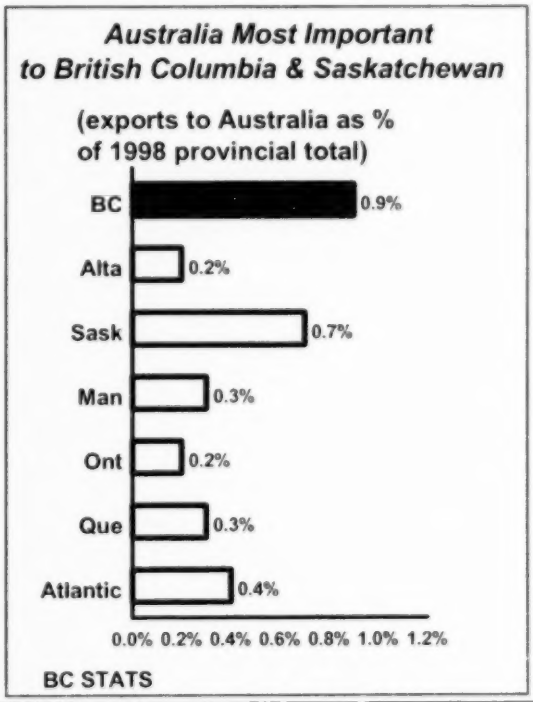
It was nevertheless the second largest amount exported by any province to Australia, exceeded only by Ontario exports of $355 million. In relation to its total trade, British Columbia's Australia bound exports were more significant than those of any other province. Shipments to Australia amounted to 0.9 per cent of all British Columbia exports in 1998, the highest ratio for any province.

British Columbia's trading links with both Japan and Australia go back a long way.

Japan was the first Asian nation to industrialise and to become a significant market for British Columbia's forest and mineral resource commodities. It remains by far the most important export market British Columbia has in the Pacific region, and its second most important export market overall.

Trade with Australia was originally fostered by links of Commonwealth and Empire. It has almost always been significant, although it has never been in the same league as current trade with Japan or China.





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As a producer of coal, metal ores, fish and agricultural products, Australia is one of the province's main competitors for resource products in Japan and other international markets. But, it is also an important export market for some British Columbia resource products. As a wealthy country with a very similar culture, Australia offers a good potential market for many of the value added products that British Columbia hopes to promote during this Team Canada Mission. It is also an important source of certain raw materials needed by British Columbia manufacturers.

'Asian Flu' Not the Only Reason for Slumping Exports to Japan

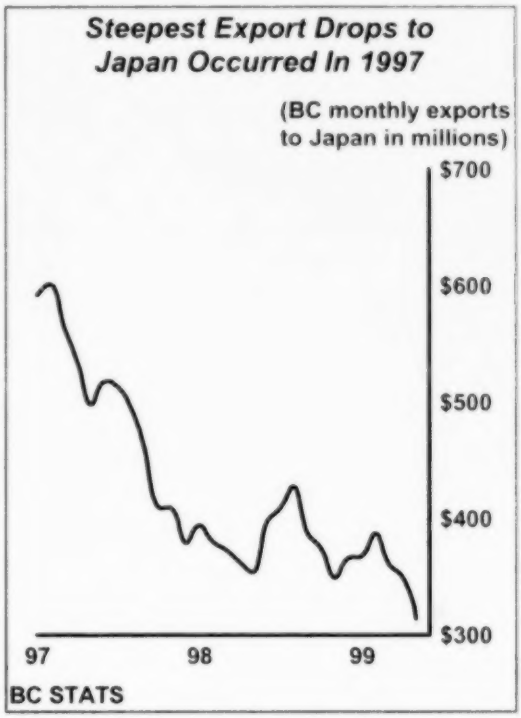
The value of British Columbia exports to Japan has been falling since early 1997, before the August 1997 Thai financial crisis that precipitated the more general Asian economic crisis.

In Japan, the crisis aggravated an already deteriorating economic situation by depressing Asian markets that were the destination for 41 per cent of its exports in 1997. But Japan's economic woes actually began at the beginning of the decade with the collapse of its 'bubble economy'. After a long period of over valued assets and over confident lending, the country experienced a sharp drop in economic growth.

Japanese real gross domestic product growth averaged 4 per cent annually between 1981 and 1990, according to figures released by the International Monetary Fund. Between 1991 and 1998, it dropped to an average of 1.3 per cent annually.

These difficulties, combined with low prices for resource commodities, caused British Columbia exports to Japan to decline through 1998, although more slowly than in the preceding year. Monthly exports to Japan dipped as low as $297 million in April 1999, and $330 million in May.

There have been other reasons for British Columbia's sagging exports to Japan besides the long Japanese slump and more recent Asian economic crisis.



The province's raw and semi-processed resource products have been facing increasingly stiff international competition in the Japanese market. For example, British Columbia coal exports to Japan compete with exports from Australia and the United States, among others. High quality metal ore deposits continue to be developed in South America, challenging British Columbia's share of Japanese markets for copper concentrates and other metallic minerals. And British Columbia faces strong competition for its forest product exports to Japan from South America, South East Asia, Russia, and the United States.

Although the United States is British Columbia's largest export market for lumber, it is also the largest exporter of lumber to Japan, after Canada. U.S. forest product exports to Japan also include substantial volumes of softwood logs, far more than are exported from any other country, including Canada.

Japan Still Second Most Important British Columbia Export Market

Japan is still British Columbia's second most important international market despite the dramatic decline in exports that occurred over the past two years. The 17 per cent of total provincial exports shipped to Japan in 1998 compares to 3 per cent shipped to China (including Hong Kong), and 8 per cent going to all of Europe. The portion to the United States was 63 cent.

Japan remains in many respects a 'natural' export market for British Columbia. Its highly advanced, but resource poor manufacturing economy draws in a steady flow of natural resource commodities.

From British Columbia's perspective, continued access to the Japanese market is vitally important. Japan is the province's biggest single customer for metallic mineral products and coal. In 1998, 49 per cent of British Columbia coal exports ($882 million out of $1,795 million) were shipped to Japan.

Dependence on the Japanese market was even higher for metallic mineral exports. Seventy per cent of copper concentrate exports went to Japan; 54 per cent of exports of molybdenum concentrates; and 60 per cent of exports of unwrought aluminum metal exports.

Japan was also the destination for 21 per cent of British Columbia's lumber exports -$1,352 million out of a total $6,437 million in 1998. The main reason Japan is such an exceptional market for lumber is because it is one of a limited number of countries where houses are traditionally built mainly of wood. Other Asian countries rely more on masonry for their residential construction, so that their needs for lumber are less.

Japanese Importers Know B.C. Mainly as Source of Resource Commodities

British Columbia's exports to Japan have remained overwhelmingly concentrated in natural resource commodities.

Ninety-five per cent of British Columbia exports to Japan in 1998 were resource based, as compared to 71 per cent of exports to the United States. While the natural resource content of U.S. bound exports has been shrinking fast in the 1990s, the natural resource portion of exports bound for Japan has remained stubbornly high. It fell only 1 percentage point between 1990 and 1998, while the resource component of exports to the United States dropped 10 percentage points.

On the other hand, the natural resource products being shipped to Japan are now more diversified and include more value added processing than was the case early in the decade. Value added wood products, for example, accounted for 6 per cent by value of all solid wood products shipped to Japan in 1998, up from 3 per cent in 1990. Plywood exports to Japan accounted for 4 per cent of the value of solid wood exports to Japan in 1998, up from 1 per cent in 1990.

Although the vast bulk of British Columbia exports to Japan are forest or mineral based products of one sort or another, there is also a small but fast growing collection of exports that are not resource based.

For example, electronic products shipped to Japan climbed from $1 million in 1990 to $42 million in both 1997 and 1998. This has been one of very few export categories to Japan that has not declined since the onset of the Asian economic crisis in mid 1997.

A similar performance has been recorded for the broad category of miscellaneous machinery and equipment exports (excluding electronics and motor vehicle products). Shipments to Japan of goods in this category increased from $17 million in 1990 to $72 million in 1997, and then fell back only slightly to $70 million in 1998.

There have also been some encouraging gains for higher value added exports in the seafood and agri-food export categories. The total value of British Columbia fisheries products shipped to Japan in 1998 was $203 million. Just under half of this ($99 million) was herring roe, mainly in preserved form. Fresh or frozen clams, oysters, and sea urchins accounted for another $12 million.

Agricultural exports to Japan totalled $146 million in 1998. Included in this were goods as diverse as pork products ($27 million), cheese ($4 million), mushrooms ($11 million), blueberries ($6 million), and beef fat ($28 million).

Improving the Value Added Content of Exports to Japan

Mr. Tadashi Miyagawa, the Japanese Consul in Vancouver in charge of economic affairs, feels that the timing is right to promote more exports of value added goods to Japan. Mr. Miyagawa asserts that the Japanese economy is finally bouncing back, with an annualised growth rate of 8 per cent for the first quarter of this year. He recognises that Japanese people still think of Canada only as a source of natural resource products, and do not associate it yet with high technology products, although he believes that could be changed. He feels that markets could be found in Japan for high quality Canadian medical and telecommunications equipment.

The upcoming Team Canada Mission will try to discover these markets. This will include seeking out Japanese customers for Canadian consumer products. But it will also include looking for opportunities to export industrial components needed by Japanese manufacturers.

Globalisation has meant that Japan's famously successful manufacturing industries absorb substantial volumes of imported components. Some of these are purchased in open international markets. For others, Japanese manufacturers have developed their own offshore production facilities. An important example of Japanese offshore manufacturing facility located in British Columbia is the Toyota wheel plant in Delta, producing auto wheels for export to Japan as well as to Toyota assembly plants in North America.

In some cases, British Columbia companies have been able to export value added products to Japan by entering into corporate alliances with Japanese partners. A famous example has been the link established between Ballard Power Systems and Ebara Corporation of Japan. The arrangement provides fuel cell developer Ballard with a customer in Japan, and Ebara with the technology to produce a new generation of environmentally sound stationary power generating units. The two companies have established a separate company called Ebara Ballard to market, distribute, and eventually to manufacture power plants.

Ballard may establish more Japanese connections in future. Its fuel cells have been acquired for testing purposes by Honda, Matsushita, Nissan and Yamaha.

Vancouver based Martec is another example of a British Columbia company finding a Japanese partner to help it grow, and to gain access to the Japanese market. Martec is a manufacturer of hot inplace asphalt recycling equipment that is owned 50 per cent by Artec of Vancouver, and 50 per cent by Marubeni Corp of Tokyo. Artec brought its leading edge technology to the partnership, while Marubeni brought cash and its international marketing reach. The new company's AR2000 asphalt recycling machines are designed in British Columbia and marketed on a worldwide basis.

Industrial Imports from Japan Needed by British Columbia Manufacturers

Probably the best known imports from Japan are high quality consumer electronic goods and motor vehicles. But Japan is a also an important international source for industrial parts and materials needed to manufacture goods ranging from steel products and plastics, to electronic equipment and automobiles.

These include, for example, 1998 Canadian imports of auto parts valued at $1,635 million. Some of these were destined for the aftermarket, but most went to Japanese owned assembly plants in central Canada.

There were also $1,622 million of electronic components imported into Canada from Japan in 1998. Much of this trade was destined for electronic assembly operations in Canada.

Canadian manufacturers, construction companies, and other customers imported $307 million of steel and $322 million of products made from steel - such as pipe, rails, bolts, and cable.

Canadian manufacturers also look to Japanese suppliers for production machinery needed to keep their operations competitive. Imports of industrial equipment from Japan in 1998 included, for example, $143 million of machining centres for metal working, $102 million of special function machines, $79 million of pressing/stamping machines, $55 million of injection moulding machines, and $48 million of numerically controlled lathes.

1998 Exports

	to Japan		to Australia	
	($ millions)	% of all exports from province	($ millions)	% of all exports from province
BC	4,532	17.4%	226	0.9%
Alta	1,372	4.4%	68	0.2%
Sask	695	6.9%	70	0.7%
Man	376	4.7%	21	0.3%
Ont	659	0.4%	355	0.2%
Que	434	0.8%	158	0.3%
Atlantic	447	3.7%	47	0.4%

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1998 Exports to Japan and Australia – Selected Commodities –

	British Columbia Exports to:				B.C. Per Cent of Canadian Exports	
	Japan ($.000)		Australia ($.000)		to Japan	to Australia
WOOD PRODUCTS	**1,672,015**	**37%**	**80,255**	**35%**	**92%**	**95%**
Lumber (softwood)	1,352,182	30%	78,942	35%	96%	100%
Cedar Shakes and Shingles	241	0%	244	0%	100%	100%
Plywood (softwood)	72,347	2%	29	0%	100%	36%
Selected Value Added Wood Products	98,267	2%	804	0%	73%	42%
other	148,978	3%	236	0%	80%	8%
PULP AND PAPER PRODUCTS	**668,559**	**15%**	**29,864**	**13%**	**65%**	**61%**
Pulp	480,773	11%	27,679	12%	62%	84%
Newsprint	163,093	4%	399	0%	72%	100%
Paper, Paperboard - exc. Newsprint	23,181	1%	1,786	1%	99%	22%
other	1,511	0%	0	0%	71%	0%
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD OTHER THAN FISH	**146,239**	**3%**	**5,608**	**2%**	**7%**	**12%**
Fruit and Nuts	8,122	0%	0	0%	43%	0%
Vegetables	11,475	0%	0	0%	42%	0%
other	126,642	3%	5,608	2%	7%	12%
FISH PRODUCTS	**203,072**	**4%**	**9,425**	**4%**	**42%**	**97%**
Whole Fish;Fresh, Ch'd, Froz. exc Salmon	26,174	1%	0	0%	40%	NA
Whole Salmon; Fresh, Chilled, Frozen	41,205	1%	31	0%	99%	100%
Salmon; Canned, Smoked, etc.	3,675	0%	9,381	4%	98%	100%
other	132,018	3%	13	0%	35%	4%
METALLIC MINERAL PRODUCTS	**700,936**	**15%**	**266**	**0%**	**84%**	**0%**
Copper Ores and Concentrates	241,750	5%	0	0%	100%	NA
Molybdenum Ores and Concentrates	35,463	1%	261	0%	100%	100%
Unwrought Aluminum	322,021	7%	0	0%	100%	0%
Unwrought Zinc	14,266	0%	0	0%	92%	NA
other	87,436	2%	5	0%	40%	0%
ENERGY PRODUCTS	**883,251**	**19%**	**2,983**	**1%**	**73%**	**63%**
Natural Gas	0	0%	0	0%	NA	NA
Coal	882,095	19%	102	0%	74%	100%
Electricity	0	0%	0	0%	NA	NA
other	1,156	0%	2,881	1%	7%	62%
MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT	**131,179**	**3%**	**58,158**	**26%**	**26%**	**13%**
Motor Vehicles and Parts	19,034	0%	46,467	21%	29%	52%
Electrical/Electronic/Communications	42,205	1%	1,126	0%	29%	1%
other	69,941	2%	10,565	5%	23%	4%
PLASTICS AND ARTICLES OF PLASTIC	**3,078**	**0%**	**1,572**	**1%**	**7%**	**5%**
APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES	**5,158**	**0%**	**120**	**0%**	**41%**	**12%**
ALL OTHER COMMODITIES	**118,021**	**3%**	**38,048**	**17%**	**20%**	**17%**
GRAND TOTAL	**4,531,508**	**100%**	**226,298**	**100%**	**53%**	**24%**

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Australian–Canadian Trade and Investment Relationships Build On Similarities

Australia is not a natural trade partner for British Columbia in the same way that resource poor Japan is. Rich in natural resources, Australia's economy is much more like British Columbia's. This similarity means that Australia is one of British Columbia's strongest competitors selling mineral products into international markets.

In the Japanese market, for example, Australia is British Columbia's principal competitor for coal, and an important competitor for copper concentrates, aluminum metal, and fish products – among others. Even in the United States market, Australian commodities compete to some extent with commodities from British Columbia.

And yet similarities in the economies of Australia and British Columbia have also produced trade and investment opportunities, particularly in the mining industry. In a summary of Australian-Canadian trade and investment relations, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) reports that 'mining and primary products processing constitute the bulk of Australian investment in Canada' in dollar-value and employment terms', and that 'almost half of Canada's total investment in Australia is in mining'. They add that 'mining is likely to remain the long-term foundation of Canadian investment in Australia'.

Among the more prominent examples of Australian–Canadian mining industry connections have been Australian based BHP's participation in the North West Territories Ekati diamond project, and Vancouver based Placer Dome's Australian mines operated through its Sidney subsidiary Placer Dome Asia Pacific.

Overall, DFAIT reports '36 Australian firms known to have some form of equity presence in Canada' and 'approximately 145 Canadian firms --- now active in Australia via some form of equity arrangement (subsidiary, joint venture, etc.)'. They observe that many Canadian companies have set up operations in Australia simply to expand their activities to that country, but that 'for others, Australia is viewed as a launching pad to achieve long-term strategic goals in the Asia Pacific region'.

Not surprisingly, trade officials in both Australia and Canada aim to increase the manufactured component of their respective export mixes.

Kevin Lamb, Australia's Consul in Vancouver, describes Australian exports to British Columbia as 'diverse, covering a wide range of consumer and industrial items. In dollar terms however, Australian exports are still heavily skewed to commodities such as aluminum ore, sugar and beef.' He states that 'Australia's export promotion activities in British Columbia are focussed largely on value added consumer products, such as food and wine.' He points out that 'in these areas British Columbians have always been receptive to products branded "made in Australia."'

British Columbia Exports to Australia Concentrated in Few Categories

Just over half (55 per cent) of British Columbia exports to Australia in 1998 were resource commodities, mainly forest products.

Like Japan, Australia is a country in which residential construction is mainly in wood, so that it could potentially become a good market for materials, tools and building processes developed in Canada. So far, the only building material moving in substantial volumes from British Columbia to Australia is lumber. Lumber exports to Australia amounted to $79 million in 1998, 35 per cent of total provincial exports to that market.

Pulp exports from British Columbia to Australia were also significant, amounting to $28 million, or 12 per cent of the province's total exports to Australia in 1998.

Canned salmon accounted for another 4 per cent. There might also have been some considerable value of frozen salmon to add to this had it not been for a 24 year Australian ban on imports of fresh, chilled and frozen salmon. Canada has successfully contested the ban through the World Trade Organisation. However, it has still not been fully resolved at time of writing. If some agreement can be reached to remove this barrier to trade, British Columbia salmon producers can hope to ship a wider range of products to Australia in future.

A striking 21 per cent of all British Columbia exports to Australia in 1998 were concentrated in motor vehicles and parts. These were mainly heavy trucks shipped by Western Star Trucks of Kelowna. Western Star has strong corporate links to Australia, and a product well suited to the needs of truckers in that country so that it has been able to claim 10 per cent of the Australian market for heavy trucks in 1998. In North America, it claims to have captured 8 per cent of the Canadian market and 2 per cent of the U.S. market.

Australia Important to British Columbia as a Source of Raw Materials

British Columbia manufacturers have come to rely on Australian suppliers for some of their raw material inputs.

Australia was the source for $135 million of aluminum ore and concentrate entering British Columbia in 1998, much or most of it destined for the ALCAN smelter at Kitimat. British Columbia has the electrical power resources needed to produce aluminum metal from ore, but not the ore itself. Much of the aluminum metal smelted in British Columbia is exported.

Thirty-nine million dollars of raw cane sugar was imported through British Columbia ports from Australia in 1998. Much or most of this was refined in British Columbia. The sugar produced includes some consumed within the province and some shipped further east.

Frozen grinding beef is another example of Australian raw material imported by British Columbia manufacturers. Grinding beef is purchased in industrial volumes to produce processed meat products. A significant portion of the $28 million of frozen boneless beef coming into British Columbia from Australia in 1998 was used for this purpose. The processed meats produced from it included some exported to foreign markets.

Infoline

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fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

also on the Internet at http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,028.3	0.7
Canada	30,482.9	0.9
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1997	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jun	3,029	9.6
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jun	2,463	13.7
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jun	2,769	1.0
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Jul '99	one year ago
BC	112.0	1.4
Canada	110.8	1.8
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Aug '99	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,071	1.4
Employed - BC	1,893	1.5
Unemployed - BC	178	0.6
		Aug '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.6	8.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.8	8.3
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Sep 8/99	Sep 9/98
Prime Business Rate	6.25	7.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.05	7.45
- 5 year	7.80	7.55
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Sep 8/99	Sep 9/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4874	1.5204
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6719	0.6567
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jun '99	one year ago
BC	628.54	0.6
Canada	612.62	0.8

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

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- Tourism Room Revenue, May 1999

Next week

- Labour Force Statistics, July 1999

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